

Joe Van Esley for the Rehabilitation of the Penney House, Canton

An incredible transformation has occurred at the historic resource known as the Penney House at 44675 Joy Road in Canton. Current owner Joe Van Esley undertook a complete interior and exterior rehabilitation of the Penney House, part of a family farm owned by the Penney family from 1856 until the early 1970s. Over the time span of the Penney family ownership, many changes occurred to the resource and many layers of building materials were added. One of the most recent layers included a light brown, brick patterned, asphalt shingle siding on the entire exterior.

Upon completion of demolition of certain features and the removal of many of the inappropriate layers of materials, Mr. Van Esley and his team commenced the rehabilitation. Assisted throughout the project by Canton Township historic district commissioners Melissa McLaughlin and Terry Bennett, Van Esley installed a new roof, rebuilt porches, updated all the building systems, replaced the windows, and repaired/replaced and painted the exterior siding. The rehabilitation was extensive, but when it was completed, Mr. Van Esley said that he was glad he had done it. “Why? Because along the way I found a new appreciation of history, met people who cared, received a lot of insight on the process, and shared a sense of accomplishment.”

The house is now used for commercial purposes rather than residential, but it accurately reflects its historic appearance of a well-maintained farmhouse. As with many rehabilitation projects taken on by historic resource owners, Mr. Van Esley says that the process took a long time and the learning curve was steep. He adds, however, “The rewards are hopefully timeless.”



Before



After

Historic Preservation in Michigan